

## EDUCATION EQUITY

Our schools are a microcosm of our society. Ensuring educational equity means addressing the social, economic, and cultural inequalities that exist outside of school buildings. We must address systemic and infrastructure issues that impact educational opportunities for our youth and their families. This means not only addressing their academic needs, but also ensuring that schools are nurturing them emotionally and tending to their behavioral health needs where needed as well.



**Children's Defense Fund-Ohio recommends the following steps to protect and enhance the vitality of all Ohio families:**

1. **Invest in Education Equity.** Ohio must implement a more equitable school funding approach to make sure all districts have the resources they need to provide high-quality instruction and learning opportunities for all Ohio students in K-12.
2. **Ensure affordability and availability of broadband internet in Ohio to ensure all Ohio children can access educational opportunities.** Access to broadband internet is now a “super determinant of health” that affects nearly all aspects of child well-being, especially during a pandemic. Ohio needs critical investments to improve and expand broadband internet availability, affordability and access in rural and urban areas.
3. **Supporting the “whole child” during the pandemic.** Federal and state relief for families and children also means helping schools to support the behavioral health of their students. Ohio must build on to the health and wellness funding included in the last biennial budget to make sure that our children are not only academically ready, but emotionally healthy and ready to transition to adulthood.

### FAST FACTS

*In 2018-2019, Ohio's four-year high school graduation rate was 85%, but this varied greatly by school district – in fact, while 95% of suburban students graduated in four years, only 76% of urban students during this same school year.*

*In 2018-2019, 1 in 4 students were chronically absent from school – missing 10% or more of their school year – a rate disproportionately higher for students who are BIPOC, economically disadvantaged, experiencing homelessness, and/or disabled.*

*Over 1 million Ohioans, many of whom live in rural and urban areas of the state lack basic access to broadband internet. This lack of access means that many students throughout Ohio could not attend school virtually in the Spring and many are still facing challenges accessing their education this fall.*

## CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

1. Many children face obstacles to pursuing educational opportunities that are out of their control. What will you do to address the impacts of poverty and inequitable investments in schools throughout the state and other factors that contribute to education inequity and disparate child outcomes?
2. What is your plan in the short and long-term to address the digital divide and ensure all children and families can access broadband internet?